HISTORY

OF THE

BAY CITIES

MICHIGAN

ILLUSTRATED

1888

BAY CITY, - MICH.

James Shearer
Bay City, Mich

Published 1888

BAY CITY,

THE

CITIES OF THE BAY

Illustrated.

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1888.

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WATER WORKS.

THE CITIES OF THE BAY.

Bay City, the capital of Bay County, and the chief city of northern Michigan, is beautifully situated on the right bank of Saginaw River four miles from Saginaw Bay, the most important arm of Lake Huron. Although its identity can be traced back to 1838, still the city cannot be said to have had an individuality or existence until 1860, when a sufficient number of people had assembled here, and enough enterprise was manifest to suggest a permanent settlement for what has proven to be one of the most prosperous and most remarkable municipalities of the United States. Its rapid growth since war times has often occasioned the remark that it was a second Chicago. Although not possessing the great western territory which aided the commercial growth of Chicago and also favored the increase of population of that city, Bay City has drawn largely from the East and South, and has, by reason of its great natural advantages, been forced ahead from its beginning in 1860 with a population of about 700 to an estimated population of 35,000 in 1888.

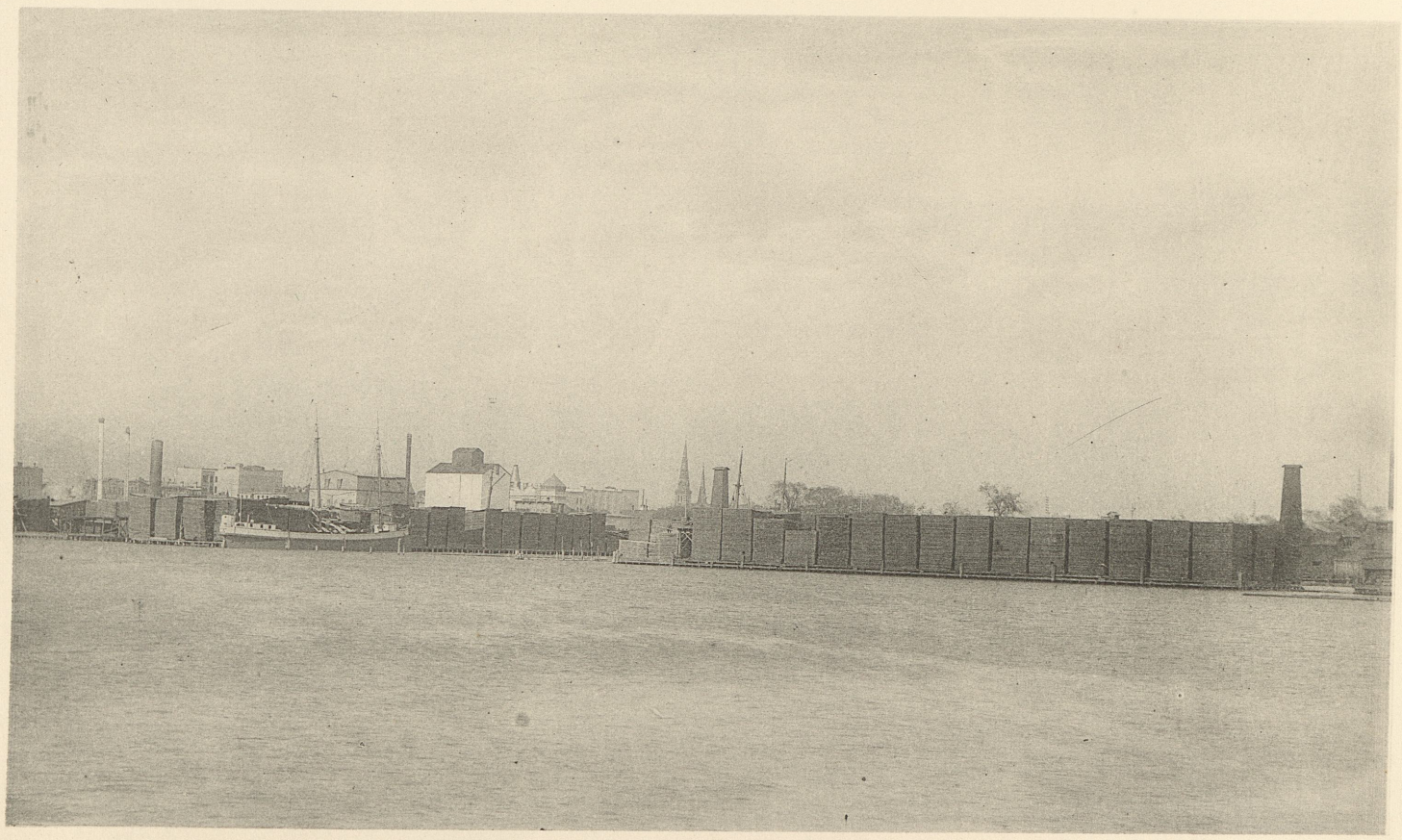
Bay City's growth from 1870 to 1880 was astonishing, having more than doubled, and in this

BIRDSEYE FROM COURT HOUSE, LOOKING EAST.

THE SAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY (WEST SIDE.)

PHŒNIX BLOCK.

RIVER VIEW, SOUTH FROM THIRD ST. BRIDGE.



A VIEW ACROSS THE RIVER, FROM CAPTAIN DAVIDSON'S SHIP YARD.

RESIDENCE OF L. E. NOYES.

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BAY CITY MILLS.

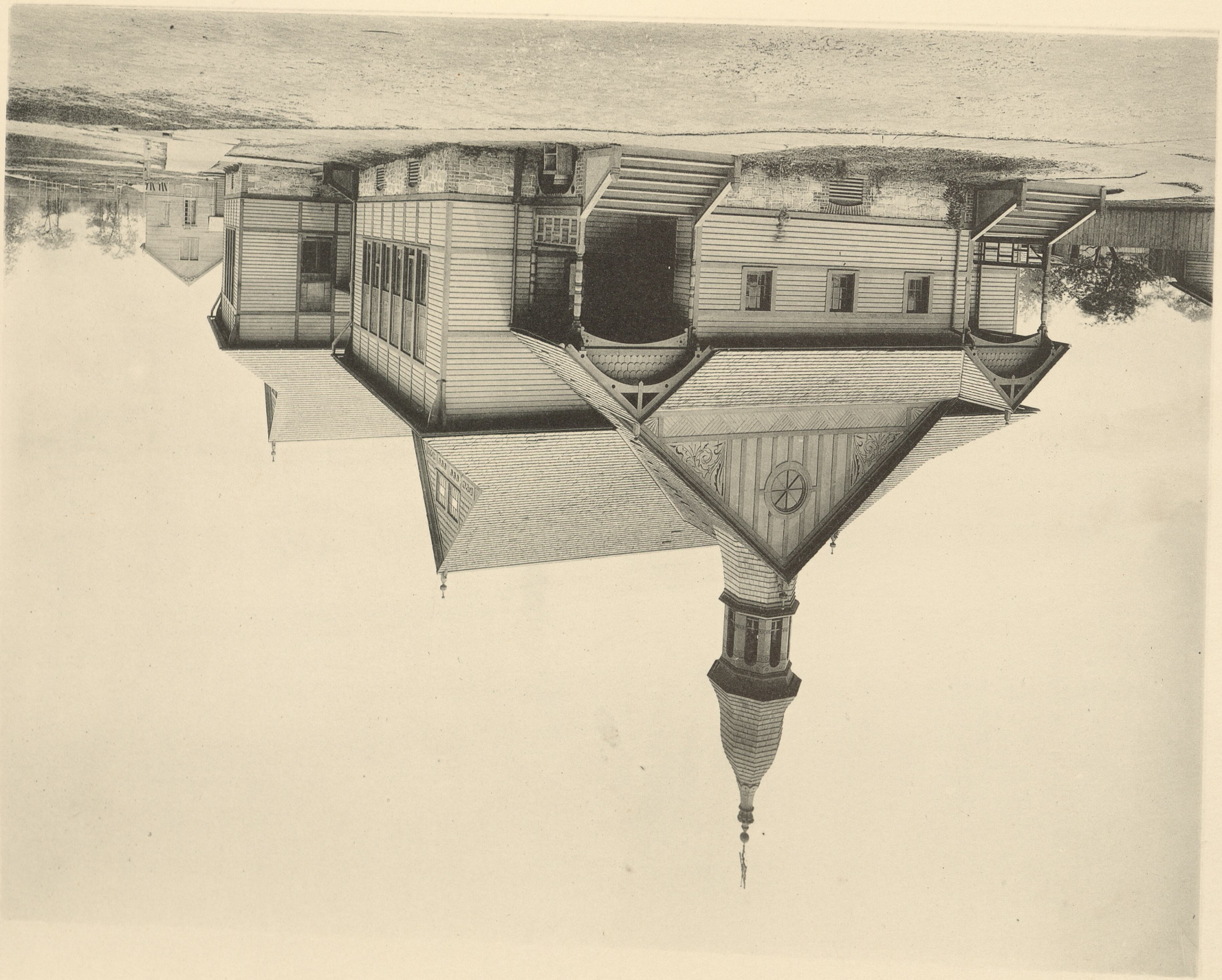
respect, the percentage of increase was eclipsed by only two cities in the entire nation. The growth seems to have continued, each successive census showing an advancement almost incomprehensible.

History says that the Saginaw Valley was visited as early as 1792, and that the grandfather of Medor Tromble camped upon the verdure covered banks of Saginaw River at the point where now booms the energetic Bay City. Trading with the Indians was the incentive which brought the early visitors here, furs being plentiful and cheap and in great demand throughout the Eastern States. There was no actual settlement here prior to 1850. By that time a few families had become scattered in this region on farms of which they took possession under grants from the government. Three or four buildings on the river bank at about where the Fraser House and Watson Block now stand, were the commercial headquarters of these farmers.

Captain Joseph F. Marsac was a pioneer settler, having located here in 1838. At that time and until 1843 this entire region was included in the township of Saginaw, Saginaw County. The settlement near the Mouth of Saginaw River, now Bay City, became known about that time as Lower Saginaw and was so platted on the early maps to designate the hamlet. In 1857 it was found that Saginaw County was too large in territory, and too unwieldy in political times.

PINE RIDGE CEMETERY SHOWING SOLDIERS GRAVES IN FOREGROUND.

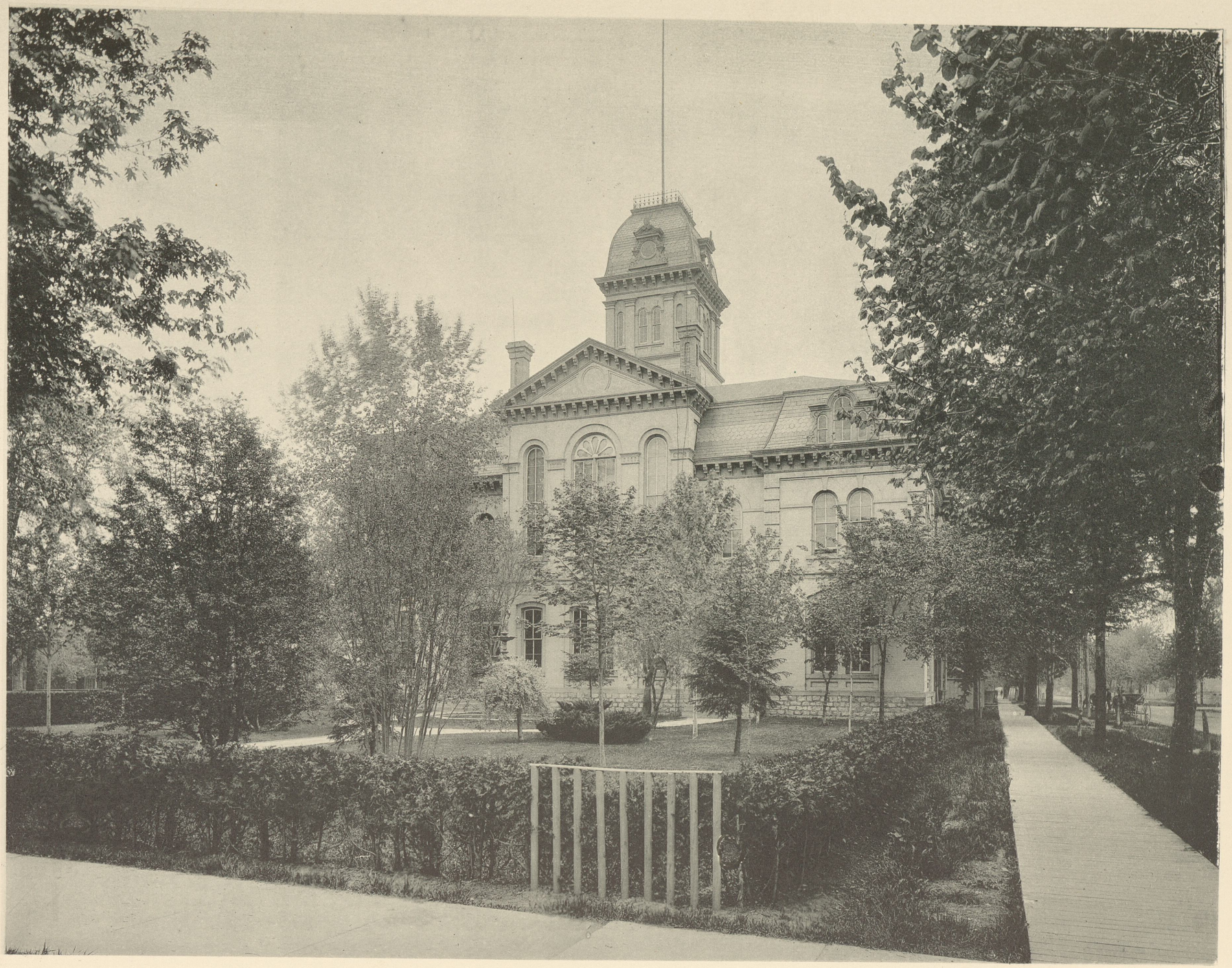
SECOND WARD SCHOOL, (WEST SIDE.)



AU SABLE, SOUTH FROM NORTH UNION STREET, (WEST SIDE.)

MIDLAND STREET, WEST FROM CORNELIA STREET, (WEST SIDE.)

SHEARER BLOCKS.



COURT HOUSE.

WATER STREET, SHOWING PHŒNIX MILLS.

The feeling grew that the marsh just north of the present city of East Saginaw should form the southern line of a new county. The act was approved in 1857 and Bay County came into existence with Bay City as its seat.

In 1837 there was felt a demand throughout the Saginaw Valley for lumber with which to construct the houses of the settlers who were coming northward from Detroit. A saw mill was erected at a point in the upper end of the present city of Bay City, or what was formerly known as Portsmouth. It was but a short time afterward that it was ascertained that the great hand of Providence had laid out Saginaw River for the purpose of receiving the contents of the innumerable streams which branched like arms into the vast territory north, south, east and west, covered with an almost inexhaustible supply of pine and hardwood timber. It also became known that Bay City was the chosen site for the location of the manufactories to reduce the monarchs of the forest to lumber, and thereby supply the demand of the effete East. One by one the mills were erected, and then came the discovery of the unfailing basin of salt which underlies this section of Michigan. This led to the building of immense salt works, and thus two industries for the production of the grand staples of lumber and salt found their start, and insured the upbuilding of what has proven the great commercial center of Northern Michigan.

The Bay City of to-day is, in respect to its make-up, a modern city enjoying all the privileges and comforts of the most metropolitan cities of the world. Men of means who came here a few years ago with the intention of remaining only long enough to add thousands to their abundant wealth, have decided to make Bay City their permanent home. The wonderful progress made in all directions, the air of materiality which pervades every walk of life and every business enterprise, has given substantial evidence of a permanency not observed in or possessed by other cities whose growth has been of the mushroom variety.

Bay City has pushed forward through panic and depression, and evinced a spirit of go-ahead-a-tive-ness which has not only astonished the pioneer settlers, but which has attracted the attention of the world outside, until its future greatness is assured, and confidence in all business enterprises is held by those who formerly were sceptically inclined in that respect. Added to the manufacture of lumber and salt can be named a hundred other staple articles of trade which are among the city's resources.

The Bay City of 1860 was a veritable mud-hole, barred like the outcasts of Russia from the

VIEW ALONG MADISON AVE., NORTH.

civilized world. The inhabitants were ostracized, as it were, for months at a time. No communication with the busy marts could be had, except during the season of navigation, when Detroit could be reached after a long and dangerous voyage in the small craft which plied on the lakes in those times. The flight of time, however, has wrought wonderful changes, and the city of to-day is a beauty.

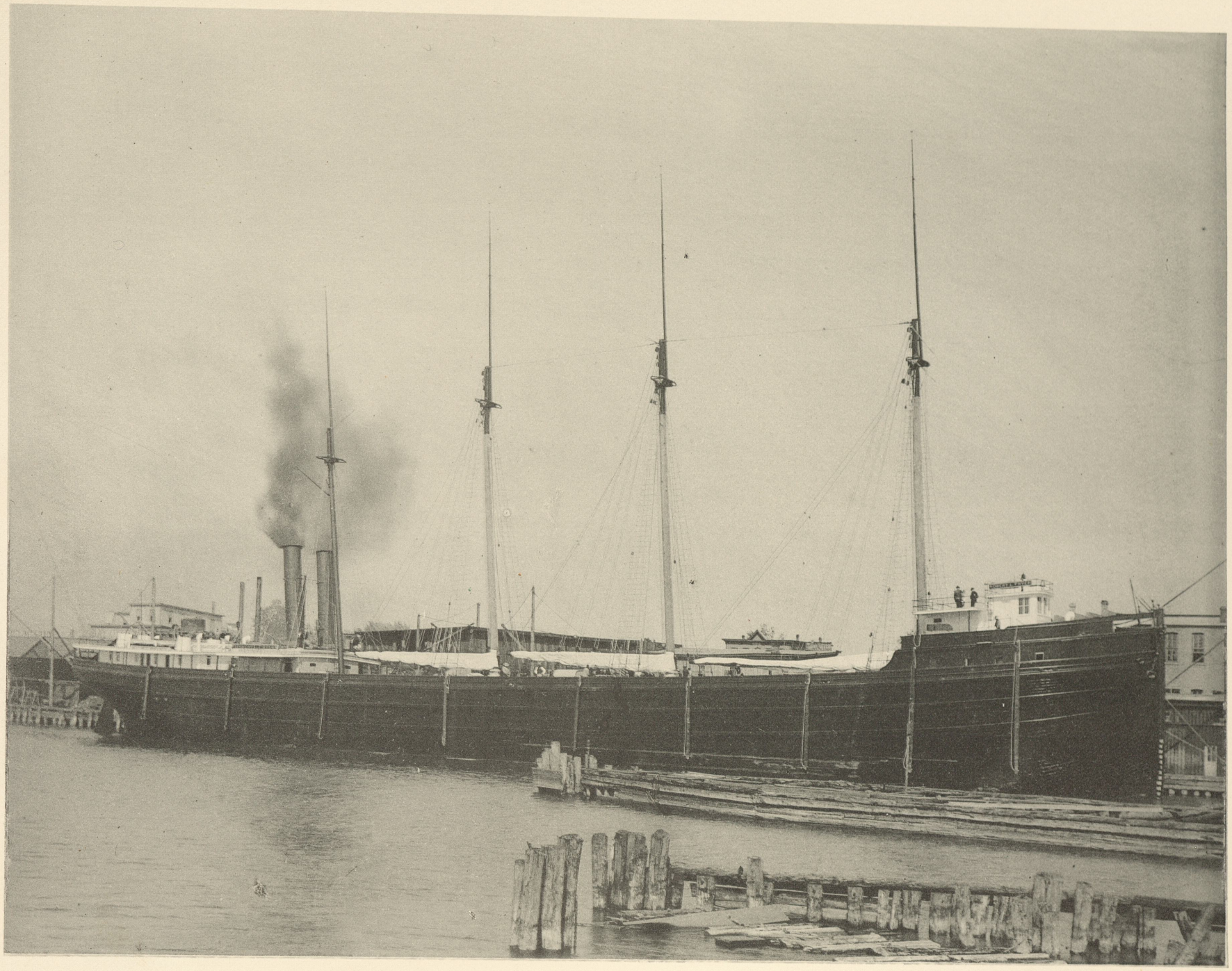
The railroad facilities, at one time superfluous, are now inadequate and new lines are proposed. One is now building to tap a section of country west and southwest, and which will eventually give Bay City an almost air-line to St. Louis, Mo. Bay City is the headquarters of three divisions and their branches of the Michigan Central,—the Mackinaw, Jackson and Detroit lines, which penetrate the northern, southeast and southwest portions of the state; the Detroit, Bay City and Alpena Railroad opens to Bay City the entire Lake Huron shore; the Gladwin extension of the Mackinaw division branches toward the northwest, and will ultimately terminate at a point on Lake Michigan. The Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad gives direct communication with the rich counties in southeastern Michigan, and with Ohio points.

The problem of crossing the Straits of Mackinaw in winter having been solved by the building of the large car ferry St. Ignace, Bay City is placed on a through line from the northwest

BIRDSEYE FROM COURT HOUSE, WEST.

MIDLAND STREET, LOOKING EAST, (WEST SIDE.)

MIDLAND STREET, LOOKING EAST, (WEST SIDE.)

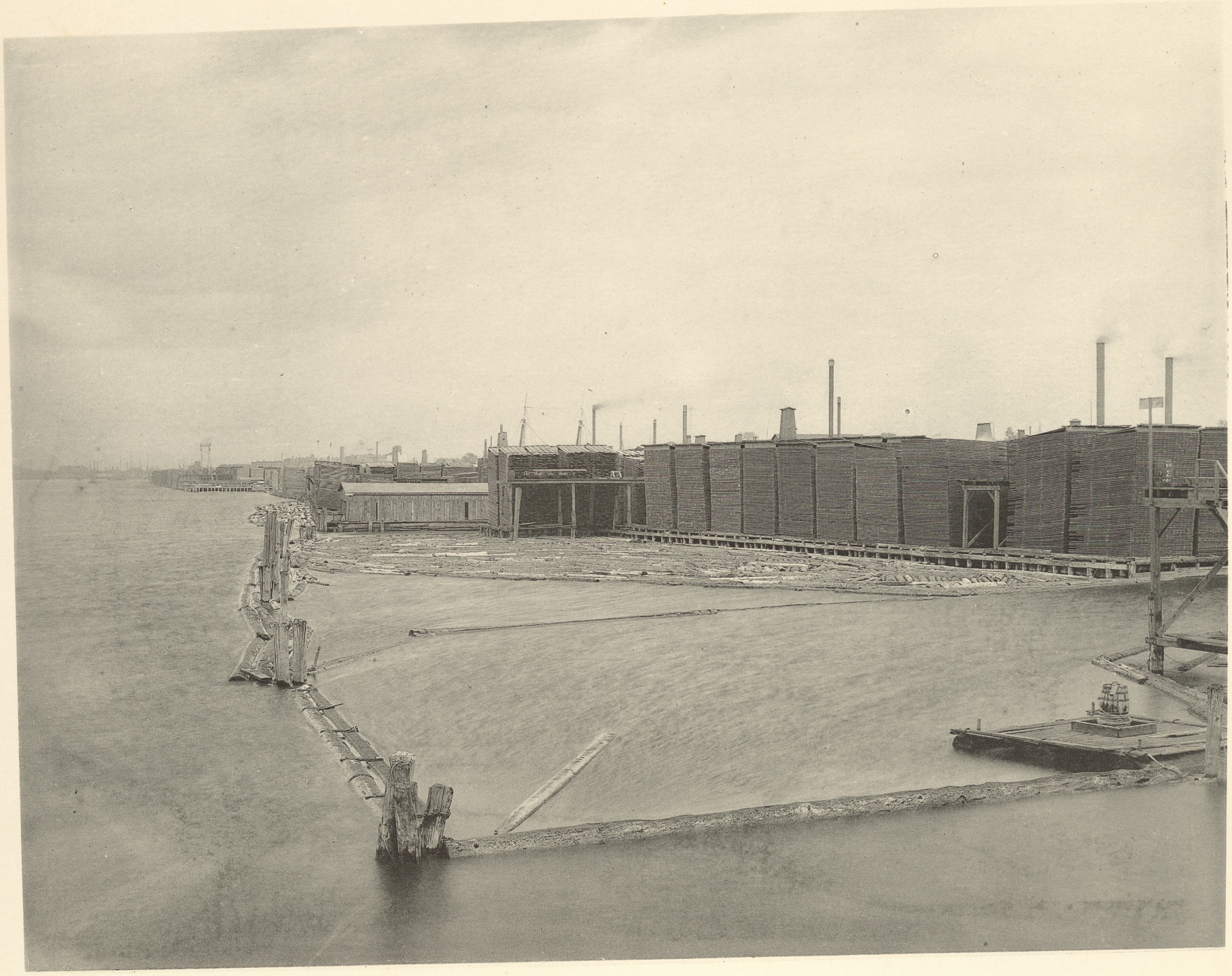


THE ROBERT L. FRYER, (BUILT IN WHEELER'S YARD, 1888.)

POST OFFICE BLOCK.

FIFTH STREET NORTH FROM MONROE.

JACKSON STREET NORTH FROM NINTH STREET.



VIEW ON EAST SIDE OF RIVER, LOOKING NORTH.

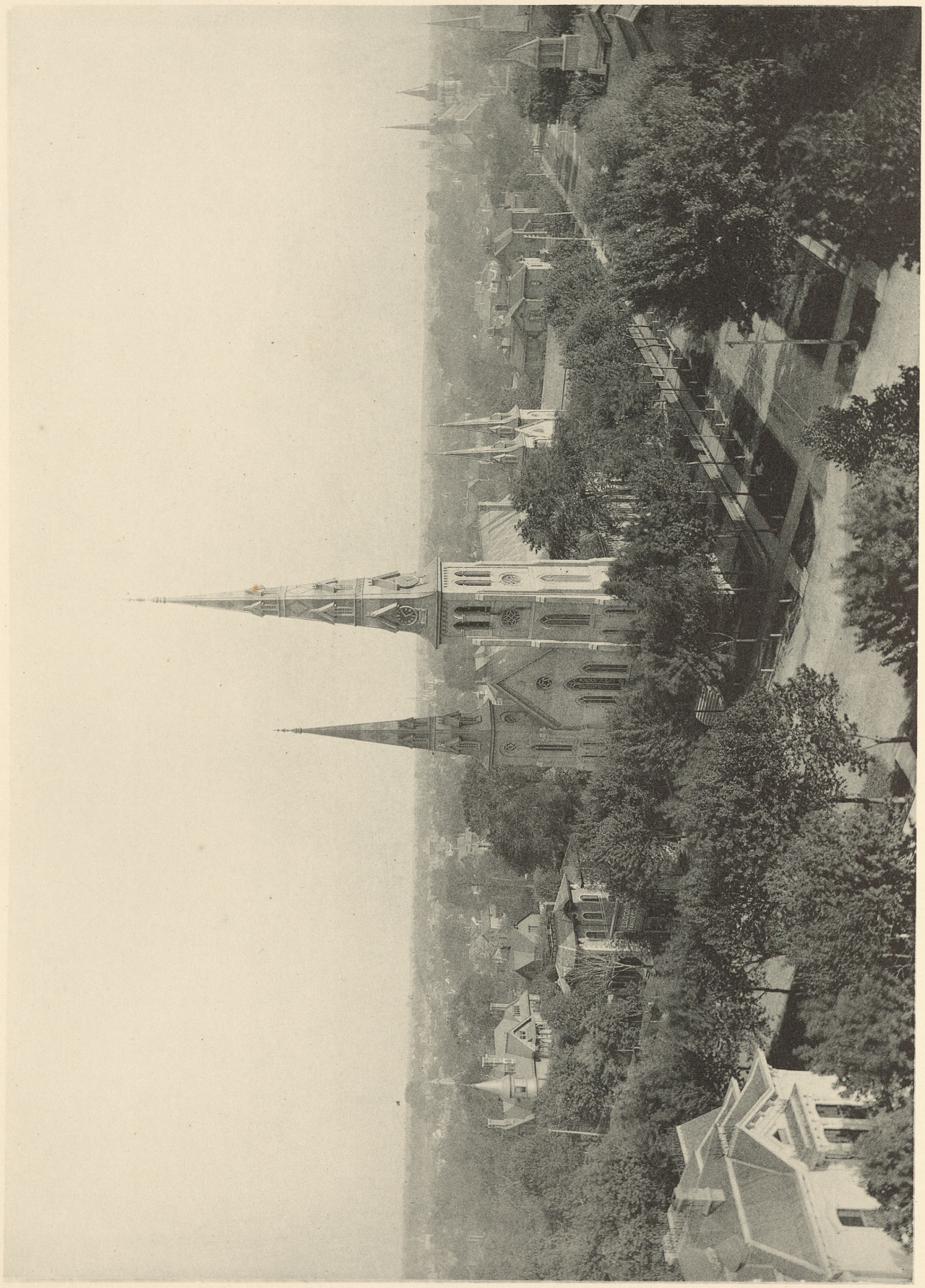
VIEW ON WATER STREET.

to the seaboard, and is already receiving the benefits of such accession of railroad traffic.

Among the coming railroad improvements in this city will be a $50,000 station house, to be erected by the Michigan Central, and for which plans and drawings have been accepted by the management of that corporation. The F. & P. M. recently acquired possession of valuable property in the city on which will be erected a commodious depot.

The corporate limits of Bay City embrace a territory extending six miles north and south, and from one and one-half to two miles east and west, comprising an area estimated at over ten square miles. The city's elevation above the river is from ten to thirty feet, the fall being sufficient to give a splendid working to the successful system of main and lateral sewers which has been gradually constructed. Of main sewers there are sixteen miles, and of lateral, eleven miles, all of which have been built within the past decade. At about the time of the introduction of sewers came the building of substantial cedar block pavements until one may drive a distance of fourteen miles on paved streets alone. Many other thoroughfares are graveled or macadamized. The total length of the streets in the city is 127 miles. They are, as a general rule, abundantly shaded with elm, maple, oak and poplar.

The first brick business block was erected in 1862. Were those of the present time placed



BIRDSEYE FROM COURT HOUSE, LOOKING SOUTH EAST.

INTERIOR ST. JAMES CHURCH.

DOLSEN SCHOOL BUILDING.

F. W. WHEELER'S SHIP YARD, (WEST SIDE.)

DEVLIN'S BUSINESS COLLEGE.

POLISH CHURCH.

FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS.

in a continuous line, they would reach a distance of six miles; and were the frame structures which are used for business purposes, included, the length would be more than doubled. The character of the brick buildings is modern and substantial. Some reach the height of five stories, some of four and many of three. Among the more prominent buildings is the opera house erected in 1886 at a cost of $60,000, a public library building erected in 1887 at a cost of $15,000; the Phœnix block erected in 1887 at a cost of $96,000. Other prominent buildings are the Court house, Shearer, Griswold, Averell, Union, Watson, Cranage, Eddy, McEwan and Bank blocks.

As a just acknowledgement of Bay City's importance, the government of the United States has removed a number of offices to this city, and to this significant fact can be appended the statement that the district and circuit courts of the United States have recently been established here. To accommodate the government's needs an appropriation of $200,000 has been made for the erection of a public building, the commencement of which will begin in the near future. It will be a stately edifice and its material will represent the resources of Michigan so far as can be.

The past has demonstrated that the subject of educational facilities in Bay City has been in proper hands, and that the governing minds have been in favor of extending the advantages to an unstinted degree, avoiding the tendency toward extravagance which has shown itself in rapidly growing municipalities. The fruits of such wisdom are graded and high school privileges unsurpassed by any city in the west. It is an undisputed fact that the west surpasses the east in the architectural beauty of its houses of learning, and this may be accounted for, to a certain extent, by saying that the people of the west have profited by the experience of the people of the east. The liberality of educational matters has worked a meritorious result in Bay City. When the old resident, who, in 1860 looked with pride upon a small wooden structure as a model school house, stops to consider the number of substantially built brick edifices devoted to the instruction of the young, he may weigh in his mind the remarkable progress which has been made here. To-day there stand as monuments to the liberality, wisdom and enterprise of the people, no fewer than eleven public school buildings, seven of which are of brick and stone. To the number may be added a business college, and five parochial schools, the capacity of all being fully tested.

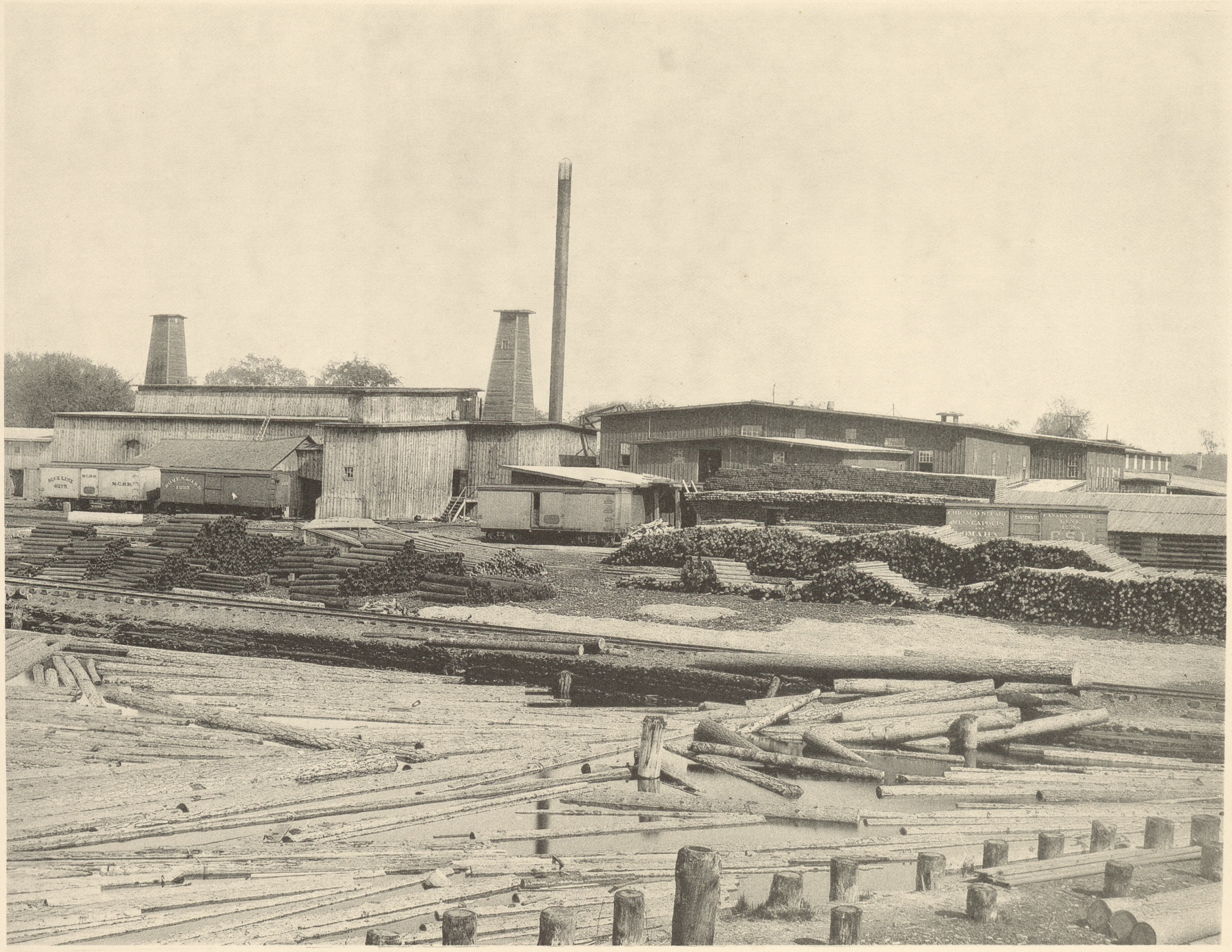
The increase in the number of pupils in the public schools has been so enormous that new buildings and additions are demanded each year. In substantiation of this it may be said that at the present time two of the largest school buildings in the city are being enlarged to accommodate

RESIDENCE OF HIRAM EMERY, (WEST SIDE.)

the growing demands for room. The census of school children shows a remarkable growth. In 1865 there were 702, while in 1887 there were 7,293, and the census of 1888 will show 7,500. As an illustration of the point attained by a full course in the public schools of Bay City, it need only be said that a diploma from the high school entitles the holder to admission without examination to the justly prominent seat of learning—Michigan University.

The value of public school property in Bay City approaches very closely, $200,000, while the value of other school property may be placed at one-third that amount. The aim has been to develop both public and private scholastic facilities equal to any to be found in this country. It has been a special endeavor on the part of the prominent and controlling citizens, without regard to religious or political considerations, to expend the broad idea of free schools, and $55,000 is annually expended to maintain the reputation of Bay City in that respect.

For number, substantiality and beauty of design in church edifices, Bay City leads every city in Michigan except Detroit. The progress of church building has eclipsed that of schools. They are, as a rule, large, handsome, well appointed and replete with every convenience, while the work done in the furtherance of the gospel cause will compare favorably with any city in the country. Bay City may be called a city of churches, for there are twenty-six of them here, re-



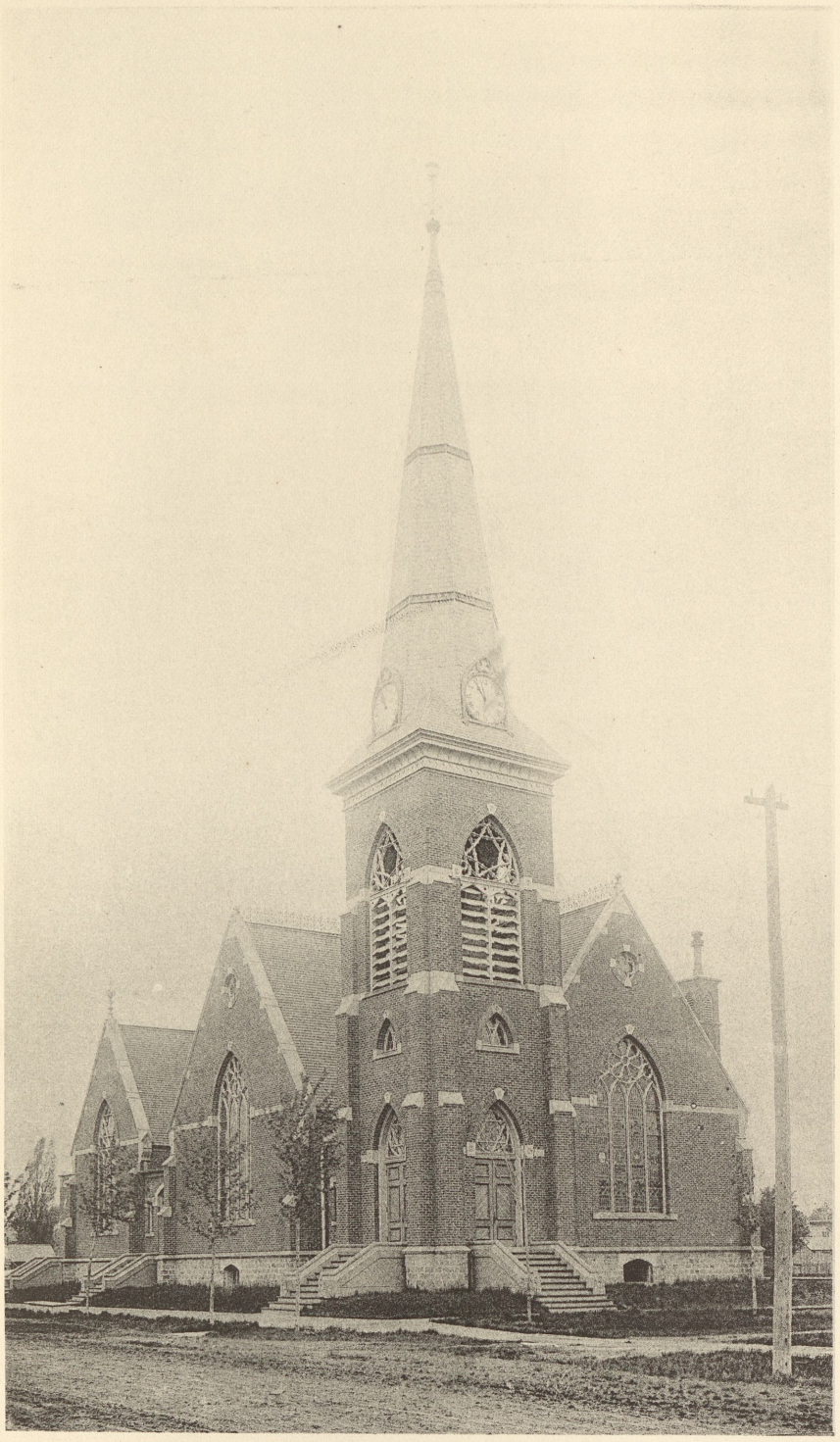
MICHIGAN PIPE WORKS, FROM RIVER.

CENTER STREET, WEST FROM LINCOLN STREET.

NEW MADISON AVENUE M. E. CHURCH.

CAPTAIN DAVIDSON'S SHIP-YARD, (WEST SIDE.)

RESIDENCE OF GEO. W. MANN.



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
(WEST SIDE.)

presenting eleven different denominations. The inhabitants of Bay City are a church-going people, and the municipality is less tainted with crime, disorder, pauperism and suffering than most places of its population. The moral tone of the people has improved as the spreading of the doctrine of Christ has increased. One of the recently completed edifices is Trinity Episcopal, costing $75,000. Another is St. James, costing $75,000. The Methodist Episcopal, now in process of construction will cost $40,000. The first Baptist cost $75,000. The Presbyterian congregation have plans for a new church and will build in the course of two years.

To its five banks Bay City points with justifiable pride. The last reports showed the total deposits to have been $2,118, 829,25, and the loans to have been $2,955,547.57.

Bay City was the first city in Michigan to undertake the operation of an electric light plant for municipal lighting. It owns and operates a system embracing 100 pole lights, six towers, and twenty miles of wire. It also owns and operates a water work system embracing 24½ miles of distributing mains, four miles of inlet pipe and 180 public fire hydrants. The pumping station contains three engines of the Holly make, the daily capacity of which is 10,500,000 gallons. The quantity of water annually consumed is 770,000,000 gallons. The source of supply is Saginaw Bay.

The fire department comprises five companies of thirty men. The houses are new and built of brick. An alarm system with forty stations and twenty-six miles of wire is used.

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COAL. COAL
YOUNG BROS.
COAL, WOOD, CEMENT
FIRE BRICK, GLASS &C.
BAY COUNTY ICE
Reid Towing and Wrecking
WATER STREET, NORTH FROM SIXTH ST.

ST. JAMES CHURCH.

BIRDSEYE FROM WATER WORKS, LOOKING WEST.

RESIDENCE OF WM. WESTOVER.

VIEW ALONG RIVER, EAST FROM MICHIGAN PIPE WORKS.

A RIVER VIEW, FROM R. R. BRIDGE.

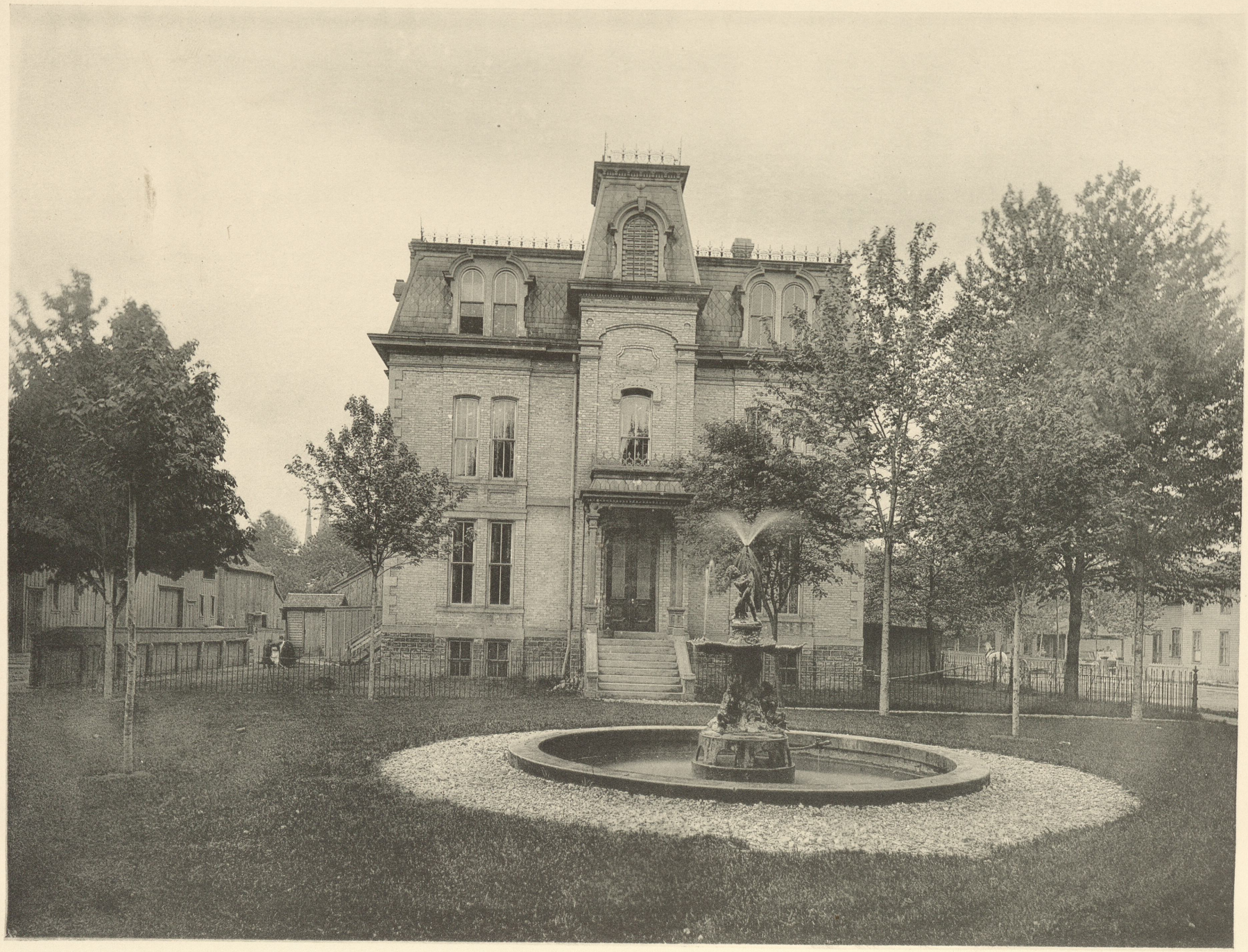
BIRDSEYE LOOKING NORTH FROM McGRAW'S MILLS.

WASHINGTON ST., SOUTH FROM CENTER STREET.

FIRST WARD SCHOOL, (WEST SIDE.)

MADISON AVENUE PARK.

ROUECH HOUSE.



BAY COUNTY JAIL.

The police department consists of one chief, one captain, two sergeants and eighteen patrolmen.

The public library contains 10,573 volumes, and the daily average of books circulated is 90,18.

The equable climate during the heated term, and its mildness in winter, makes Bay City a healthful locality. The natural grade of the land which assists the drainage, contributes to its natural salubrity.

Bay City and its suburbs are destined to become a delightful summer residence locality. Their nearness to the bay shore and the beaches, which have, within a year been opened to the public as resorts, is already appreciated, and bespeaks a large patronage for those summer haunts in the near future. The majestic expanse of river, with its miles of uniformly piled lumber, provokes favorable comment from the stranger. He visits the bay, indulges in a bath in its pure water, rolls in the surf, and wonders why the delightful place has so long remained closed to those in search of summer pleasures. Within two hours from Bay City are the resorts of Point Lookout, Heistermann Island and Bay Port, while a night's ride will take one to the fairy isle of Mackinac. For those whose business demands their attention in the day, three resorts on the bay shore are at their service.

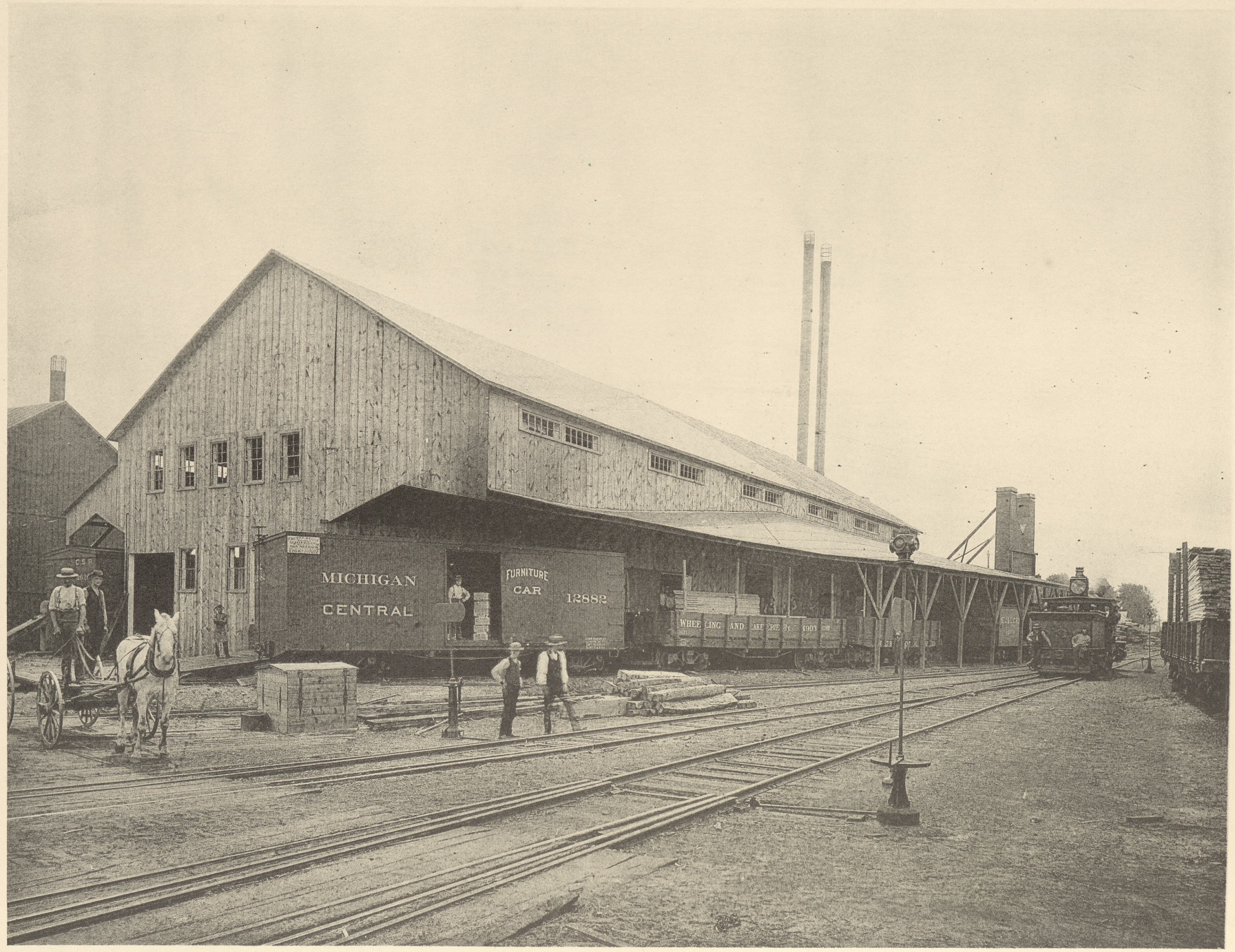
West Bay City on Saginaw river opposite Bay City, is the chief ship-building point in Michigan, ranking first on the chain of Great Lakes for the number of wooden vessels constructed within the past five years. Its general business is lumber and salt, and in every respect the city is a counterpart of its sister on the east side. Their relations are interwoven in all branches of trade, and were it not for the river which divides them, would hold the same relations as if one city. Their growth and prosperity date from the same time. Although Bay City has eclipsed it in the number of inhabitants, still the west side has had a remarkable increase in population, and is now growing as rapidly as her east side neighbor.

In 1866 there were three settlements on the west side of the river. The one at the north end bore the name of Bangor, afterward changed to Banks. Its population was then about 300. A settlement at the south end known as Salsburgh was platted in 1862, and contained about 100 souls, while Wenona, the germ of West Bay City, the largest of the settlements, occupied a space between the others.

MIDLAND STREET, LOOKING WEST, (WEST SIDE.)

WATER STREET, NORTH FROM FOURTH ST.

RESIDENCE OF GEORGE & W. D. YOUNG.



WORKS OF KRUMP MANUFACTURING CO.

CENTER STREET, LOOKING EAST.

HIGH SCHOOL.

VIEW IN PINE RIDGE CEMETERY.

Wenona came into prominence two years before 1866, at which time the saw mill of Sage & Co. was erected. The three villages grew slowly, and prior to 1877 each maintained a separate municipal goverment. They had steadily become connected by lumber and salt industries along the river front. The year 1877 brought about a consolidation of the three villages. This was an important stride. The real prosperity of the west side dates from that year.

The census of 1860 showed 200 people on the west side of the river. That of 1880 showe l 6,397, and to-day, the estimated population is 15,000.

The same business thrift and enterprise manifested on the east side has been shown here. The city covers a territory as large as that of Bay City, and although not so thickly settled, is becoming so, rapidly, as each year demonstrates. The elevation of the city is greater, and property values are lower, which induces the smaller capitalists to locate here. Many consider the west side preferable as a place of residence and business men of the east side make their homes here.

The Bay Cities are connected by three bridges, two of which are owned by the county. One has become too small to accommodate its immense traffic, and is to be replaced by one of twice its capacity,

The business streets of West Bay City are paved with cedar. The buildings are mainly of brick. The city has issued $60,000 worth of bonds, and with the proceeds is building a trunk sewer from the south to the north end of the city. It has a system of water works, electric light, fire department, police and a regular municipal government.

The residence streets are beautifully shaded, and many elegant homes are to be seen. The city is well supplied with educational and religious facilities, having adopted the liberal course of the east side in these matters.

A rich farming country surrounds the city, into which penetrate the celebrated stone roads of Bay county.

The Michigan Central railroad has just completed a large round house and machine shop, and will soon build a commodious depot.

The ship-yards have an annual capacity for turning out twenty-five of the largest vessels which float the lakes. Added to this, a plant for the building of steel and iron craft will be started this year.

WASHINGTON ST. NORTH FROM TENTH ST.

WASHINGTON ST. SOUTH FROM TENTH ST.

INTERIOR OF SECOND NATIONAL BANK.

UNIVERSALIST CHURCH.

FIRST M. E. CHURCH, (WEST SIDE.)

FIFTH WARD SCHOOL.

WOOD'S OPERA HOUSE.

FARRAGUT (FORMERLY HIGH) SCHOOL BUILDING.

The First Ward, or that part of the city, formerly known as Banks, is the headquarters of the fish business of the Saginaw valley. Here is brought the catch of the bay fisheries, and prepared for market. Hundreds of men are employed in the business, and thousands of dollars are invested in seine and smacks.

The numerous transfers of real estate in West Bay City indicate an active market. Settlers are coming in, and failing to find vacant houses, purchase sites and build.

The business people have the utmost confidence in the future prosperity of the city. Their houses show large and carefully assorted stocks—some of the finest stores of metropolitan cities having duplicates here.

A street railway company has been organized to lay tracks upon the main thoroughfares, in the form of a belt line, crossing both passenger bridges to the east side.

One of the more prominent buildings is the Sage public library, than which there is no finer in Michigan. It was the gift of H. W. Sage, of Ithaca, N. Y.

Shearer — Central Block

Shearer & Block
Bros

SHEARER'S CENTRAL BLOCK.

CENTER ST., BAY CITY.

SHEARER BROS BLOCK.

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